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WE'RE ON THE WEB
 WWW.NWTA-UNION.ORG



We are pleased that our history dates back to 1971 when The New York State Teachers Association certified our union. Today we are proudly affiliated with The New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and The American Federation of Teachers (AFT). We are also honored to be a part of The American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO).

What's good on the bookshelves

The Lost Constitution by William Martin

A great juxtaposition of a modern hunt for an annotated draft of the original Constitution and the history of the family associated with it since Shay's Rebellion.

Interesting twists and turns as well as the variety of motivations behind the desire to find it.



Playing For Pizza by John Grisham

A third string quarterback screws up. He ends up in an Italian "NFL" league. A fairly humorous and quick read. The big issues--does he win the "Super Bowl" and does he mature.

~Charlie Donner



The Agenda

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NYSUT hails Obama win; looks to new legislative session

ALBANY, N.Y. November 5, 2008 - The 600,000-member New York State United Teachers today hailed Barack Obama's historic presidential victory and congratulated federal and state lawmakers who won races last night and will be leading New York - and our nation - during challenging times.



"Today we are celebrating our nation's embrace of hope and diversity. We are confident that Barack Obama will stand squarely with working families, supporting tax equity, job creation and worker protections," said NYSUT President Richard C. Iannuzzi. "We look forward to working with an Obama administration on the many important issues facing New York and our na-

tion, including increasing educational opportunities for all students, improving access to quality health care and fixing the economy so prosperity is there for everyone."

NYSUT Executive Vice President Alan B. Lubin said NYSUT congratulated candidates who won races for Congress and seats in the state Legislature. He noted NYSUT has a long tradition of supporting both Democrats and Republicans based on their support of the issues the union's membership cares about. Lubin noted that NYSUT deployed more than 100 staff members, who volunteered to campaign for Obama in battleground states, and...

Cont'd on page 4

Inside this issue...

Wit and wisdom	2
Announcements	3
PR update	3
Obama	4
Perspectives	5
Contract connection	6
TRS update	6
Sick bank update	7
The lighter side	7
From where I stand	8-9
NYSUT ad	10
Memorials	11
What's good on the bookshelves	10



Wit and wisdom



Kevin Rustowicz,
President

As your union president, I would like to address an issue that

I believe has serious ramifications for our membership. Speaking with total candor, I believe that recent changes in administration offer promise. Promise as it relates to the passing of the budget and settling of a contract for the teachers of the NWTA.

In regard to this, as representatives of all the teachers in our district, it is our duty to defend the rights of teachers. It is also our charge to advance the interests of teachers, especially at the contract negotiations table. On the other hand, while it is the right and duty of our membership to continually review critically the behavior and policies of the administrators, we ask that the membership adhere to accepted rules of protocol when voicing dissent. Making statements in a public or community forum that are critical of our school district's policies or leadership does not serve the

broader interests of the membership.

If you or a colleague have a professional concern about an administrator, please address it with the administrator. If you feel uncomfortable with that and feel that it needs further attention, please bring it to the attention of a building rep or to me - as your union president.

I have been assured by the highest administrative authority that the power structure here will remain unchanged for at least the next five years. The primary goals of the new administration are the resolution of the contract, and the establishment of a mutually productive relationship between the NWTA and the administration. We must take Mr. Militello at his word unless we see evidence to the contrary.

I believe that it is in our collective interest to have the same goals. Please be assured that I am always here to serve you, the membership.

Yours in solidarity,
~Rusty

In memoriam



K. Gilbert Kroening, of Sanborn, NY, passed away on Wednesday, October 29, 2008, in Buffalo General Hospital. He was born in Sanborn, on February 25, 1935, the son of the late Edwin H. and Helen (Haseley) Kroening. Mr. Kroening was a graduate of Wilson High School, Buffalo State Teacher College and Niagara University. He was an industrial arts teacher and served as an administrator at Niagara Wheatfield High School for 37 years, before retiring in 1995. Mr. Kroening was a member of the Sanborn Fire Co. Band for over 60 years and an active member of St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church, North Ridge. He served on the Niagara Wheatfield's 50th Anniversary Committee and was an honorary member of the Sanborn Fire Co. His life centered around his family and friends. He was always there to lend a helping hand for those in need. He enjoyed gardening and was an antique car enthusiast. Mr. Kroening is survived by his loving wife of 52 years Norma (Rohring), they were married on June 16, 1956; also two sons, Brent M. (Lynn) Kroening of Wheatfield and Todd R. Kroening of Buffalo, NY; one daughter, Wendy L. (David) Warchocki of Wheatfield; five grandchildren, Joshua, Joelle, Jennifer, Steven and Christian; one sister, Gladys (late Benjamin) Haseley; and many nieces and nephews. He was the brother of the late Harold (Janet) Kroening and Sharon Kroening.



Christine M. Carpenter, who taught living skills and health in the Niagara Wheatfield School District until retiring in 1993, died Saturday, October 25, 2008, in Niagara Hospice House, Lockport, after a brief illness. She was 83.

Born Christine Muir in Niagara Falls, she grew up in Lewiston, attending local schools. She received her undergraduate and master's degrees in education from Buffalo State Teachers College. For 26 years, Mrs. Carpenter taught at Edward Town Middle School and Niagara Wheatfield High School.

Mrs. Carpenter was a former member of the LaSalle Yacht Club, Niagara Falls.

She was an avid bowler and participated in various local bowling leagues. In her leisure time, she enjoyed sewing, knitting, porcelain doll making and golf.

Survivors include a son, Marc M.; two daughters, Lynn Seamonson and Lea Ann Lacina; and a sister, Jessie Wagner.



What's all the BUZZ about?



You might have heard your colleagues talking about MAP, the Member Assistance Program available from NYSUT Member Benefits Trust. Or maybe you've already joined. But if you haven't, you may want to once you read about MAP's benefits.

By joining MAP, an e-mail based program, you'll be among the first to hear about new, endorsed programs and program updates. You'll receive special offers and reminders from Member Benefits or from providers of its endorsed programs. Your opinions will be solicited on new programs under consideration for endorsement. When possible, you'll help Member Benefits test potential new services and provide feedback.



its providers of endorsed programs. On average, a MAP e-mail alert is sent once every three weeks.

Rest assured, Member Benefits will only share your e-mail address with endorsed program providers and then only under controlled circumstances. Once a program provider receives approval from Member Benefits to send you an offer or information, the vendor will be required to destroy the e-mail listing after sending the communication.

This exciting program allows you to help shape future programs and services exclusively available to you and your colleagues.



Often, MAPers are entered into drawings for prizes donated by providers of endorsed programs and Member Benefits. Since MAP's introduction, MAPers have entered

drawings for a Bose® Wave Music System, free admissions to the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, 100 gallons of heating oil from Heat USA, a summer fun pack filled with a variety of items, a DVD player and OfficeMax gift cards. In addition, new MAP enrollees and existing MAPers are automatically entered into quarterly drawings; to date, prizes included digital cameras, a cross-cut shredder and an iPod nano.

MAPers receive e-mail communications from Member Benefits and occasionally from

Help make a difference. Become a MAP team member. Enroll on our secure page by logging on to www.memberbenefits.nysut.org and clicking on the "MAP Sign-up" navigation tool on the left-hand side of our home page.

For information about this program or about contractual expense reimbursement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please call NYSUT Member Benefits Trust at (800) 626-8101, e-mail benefits@nysut.org, visit www.memberbenefits.nysut.org, or refer to your NYSUT Member Benefits Trust Summary Plan Description.

Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed programs.



NWTA announcements

WNY Regional Office Winter Leadership Conference Announced!

January 30 and 31 at the Hyatt in Downtown Buffalo

Forms due back to Rich Tilyou by November 19, 2008

Open to all Officers, Reps, Chairpersons, and Committee Members are eligible to attend.

Space is limited!

Congratulations to our own Rene Brock who has been selected by NYSUT to be an ELT instructor.

Rene will be heading off to Albany at the end of June for training and will begin teaching in the summer of 2009!

The next BOD meeting is December 11, 2008 at ETMS at 3:45 PM

Kindergarten bags complete!

Recently the NWTA organized and filled Kindergarten bags to like to thank Paula Neureuther, Philisa Fazio and Lee Galm-bacher for all of their hard work in helping accomplish this project.

Each student received a drawstring book bag with a book and goodies inside.



On behalf of the PR committee we would

Sincerely,
Jennifer Dean
and
Kathleen Weber
NWTA
Public Relations



Obama continued from page 1

enlisted thousands more volunteers to make phone calls and hand out literature in state races on behalf of candidates from both major parties.

"Our endorsements are issues-based, not party-based," Lubin said. "As New York wrestles with budget deficits, our primary concern is not whether an elected assemblyman or senator is a Democrat or a Republican, but whether that elected leader will stand with us to protect education, health care and the rights of working families.

"We have a lot of work ahead. The Legislature returns in two weeks for a very important session. We're ready to roll up our

sleeves and work collaboratively with the Senate, the Assembly and Governor Paterson on finding solutions that work best for New York," Lubin added.

NYSUT represents more than 600,000 teachers, school-related professionals, academic and professional faculty in higher education, professionals in education and health care and retirees. NYSUT is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association, and the AFL-CIO.

Negotiations continue...

Our Negotiations Team is headed by Lee Galmbacher and includes Kevin Rustowicz, Glenn Hiwiller, Matt Kaderli, Mary Breier, and Cindy Mt. Pleasant.

The committee will continue to provide the membership with updates as often as possible.

you

continue to work hard, give more, and be better people. Likewise, when we are overlooked, criticized, or forgotten, we tend to shut down or walk away vowing never to volunteer for *that* again.

I know that time and time again I ask each of you to get involved in our union – to take part in who we are and what we stand for. Editorial after editorial sends a similar message. Fortunately, I've had the opportunity to see so many of you work hard, plan, organize, and help out when we need it the most. I've also watched as those who serve in leadership roles, whether as a Building Rep, on the Negotiating Team, on a committee, or as an Officer, continually give of their time, effort, and passion to help our union move forward.

Someone asked me the other day if I were ever thanked for what I do for the union. It was easy to respond with a yes; but this person probed a little further and asked if I felt the thank you was sincere. I guess I do think that people are thankful for what each of us does (*whether it is*

because they don't want any part of the job – or because they really mean it!) In all seriousness – I want to take time to tell each of you that I truly appreciate your hard work, dedication, and effort. We are strong because we work together... we are united because we believe in student success and achievement. We are educators who make a difference and who stand up for what is right. Because of all of those things - we can say that we stand for education... we stand united – we are the NWTA and I thank each and every one of you for all that you do to make us who we are. *Have a wonderful Thanksgiving.*

If you are interested in submitting an article, photo, or any other newsworthy event, please contact the Editor, Darla Bubar at dbubar@nwcsd.org.

**All submissions are subject to editing for space and clarity.*

From where I stand... saying thank you



Darla Bubar, Editor

It's that time of year again when we look back and reflect on the things we are thankful for. And as I sit to write this month's editorial, it is Veterans' Day – a day on which we honor and thank those who serve and who have served in order that we Americans can enjoy the very freedoms afforded to us by the sacrifices of our military men and women. Did you thank a Veteran today? Sometimes – it is so easy to thank others, for what they do, what they give, who they are. Their contributions are so great that it goes without saying – these people deserve the accolades they are given. Around Thanksgiving it is also easy to be thankful for all the many things we have in our lives. Those things are often referred to as blessings – easily recognizable and often times, taken for granted until we are called

upon to give thanks.

All this talk about giving thanks and getting thank yous reminds me that human nature is so very perplexing at times. Oddly, I am reminded of the cliché, "Don't sweat the small stuff." I supposed when it comes right down to it, that phrase means that we should try not to worry about those things over which we have little or no control. But as I think of the idea of a simple thank you – I wonder if that small action should be sweated over or even fretted over. I find myself thinking of those times when I do something seemingly huge but do not get recognized for it, or even worse, get criticized or told that it's not quite right before receiving the accolades I feel I deserve. Ever experienced this?



From what I've observed, humans seem to long to be thanked for the things that they do – to be recognized for their efforts. Such a small thing as saying, "Thanks," goes such a long way. When we are recognized for our efforts – we are motivated to con-

Vice President's Perspectives



Lee Galmbacher, Vice President

I wanted to personally thank each of you who contribute to VOTE COPE. As stated in my article in the October Agenda, VOTE COPE is a nationwide Non Partisan Political Action fund run by our union, NYSUT. It is New York State's largest political action group. The contributions raised are used to lobby politicians to make decisions that benefit education and teachers. Much of the money is used to prevent changes that could hurt our union. Some examples of VOTE COPE accomplishments include stopping retirement contributions after ten years, the Triborough amendment to the Taylor Law which allows you to con-

tinue on step in your salary schedule even though your contract has expired, the retirement bill which allows you to retire at 55 years with 30 years of service and is now being proposed to change to 55 years with 25 years of service, the 40% contribution back to the local to be used to promote pro-education issues and elected officials, and much more... The future of your job, your retirement, and your health care benefits hinges on the decisions coming out of Albany and Washington. By contributing to VOTE COPE, the political action fund of NYSUT, you add the weight of more than half a million members to influence these decisions! Thanks you again for supporting this year's VOTE COPE drive!

VOTE/COPE

The VOTE/COPE drive started in October and lasts through November.

Please consider raising your donation by \$1.00 paycheck.

Teachers... now is a great time to celebrate your tenure appointment or your 10 year NYSTRS anniversary by donating that extra \$1 to VOTE/COPE through payroll deduction – both of these legislations were a direct result of VOTE/COPE monies.



Contract connection

Here's your chance to win a \$10 gift card from your choice of either Starbucks, Tim Horton's, or Dunkin Donuts!

A new Superintendent is hired by the District, and he decided he will change any or all previous assignments.

Decide if the following scenario is **complaint** or **grievance** based on our contract language. Cite the page and section number from our current contract that

you used as evidence for your answer.

*all members in good standing are eligible. Winner will be drawn randomly from all correct entries submitted. Include your name, building, and gift choice along with your entry!

Congratulations to last month's winner, Amanda Jasper at ETMS, who correctly identified the scenario as a potential GRIEVANCE!

NYS TRS update

Mike Burke, NWTA Delegate

The New York State Teachers Retirement System held their 88TH annual meeting at Saratoga Springs Sunday and Monday, November 9 & 10.

Delegates meet once a year to elect board members and discuss current issues regarding the retirement system. Delegates also attend workshops pertaining to teacher retirement and system related issues.

The "Hot Button Topic" this year was the current stock market morass and how it impacts the teach-

ers retirement system. Delegates were reassured that their benefits were secure and safe and the system has an 88-billion dollar surplus. Furthermore, and in spite of dramatic losses last quarter, the system as currently funded is solvent and able to cover the accrued benefits of all active members, even those who may not collect their payment for another 30 years. If you would like more information please go on-line @ NYSTRS.org .

More information will be distributed to building reps!

Sick bank update

In accordance with its contract with the Niagara Wheatfield Board of Education, the Niagara Wheatfield Teachers Association operates a Sick Leave Bank for the teachers of the Niagara Wheatfield Central School District. The purpose of the Sick Leave Bank is to provide additional sick days to its active members who have suffered a personal illness or disability, or illness in the immediate family, when individual accumulated sick time has been exhausted. Please refer to the NWTA website for requirements on how to request days from the Sick Bank

All new teachers joining the Sick Bank will have one day deducted from their accumulated sick days for membership. All current members will have a day deducted to continue membership. Please note those Sick Bank members who are 52 years of age, or have 20 years of service in the district, will not have a day deducted, but will continue to maintain membership. Karl Heilemann, NWTA Sick Leave Bank Chairman

The lighter side

